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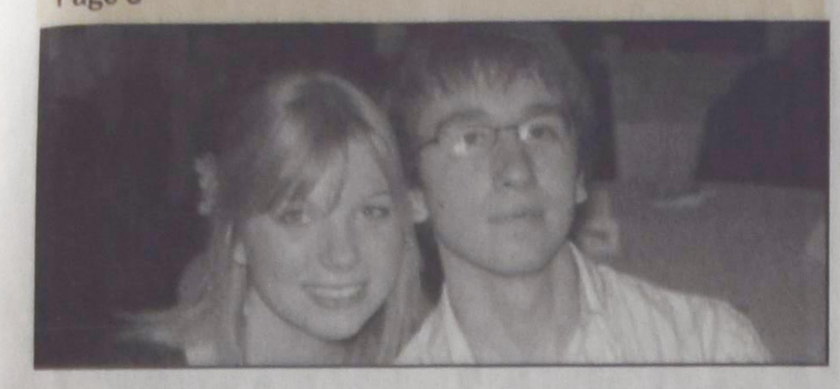

THE CROWN

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Truth or Snare:
Religion vs. Culture

ANDREW VLASBLOM
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Alright, here's the deal. Life is too short to spend on writing about a phenomenon that's been written about a million other times in thousands of different ways. But life is too long to not write about the phenomenon that is produced by those millions of times and thousands of ways when having inconsistent, variable contentions. Additionally, eternity is too indefinite to know clearly whether one will wonder why he or she did not convey his or her views on the issue deemed personally polemical. At the end of the day, it's all pretty insignificant. Or is it? The sun doesn't set at the same time for everyone in the world.

With the above in mind, I am now going to delve into some truth-based—or lack thereof—issues. The issue about to be addressed is no doubt a familiar one for many, since it deals in part with existence. Essentially, the issue exists to address existence as Christians; existence as human beings; existence as being part of this world through being in this world. Before we go any further, however, it is necessary to first define what is meant when we say "this world."

The world, which many of us believe was created by God, exists as a way for everything on the earth to exist harmoniously. Humanity, part of this natural creation, bears the need for harmony and co-existence in order to perpetuate. We are able to co-exist, which is why we are still growing in numbers today. Today, in particular, there are many diverse cultures around the world. We do not all live the same way, but we (hopefully) respect the next person's choice of lifestyle, provided that it is morally sound and providing them with fulfillment. Indeed, we recognize the fact that cultural diversity makes the world go round. The world is a cultural hub, and we are certainly a part of it; ergo, we are most certainly in and of the world.

We often find fulfillment in accepting other cultures. This is reflected in our Christian missionaries who are more than willing to practice the cultural customs of indigenous peoples, in order to reveal to indigenous peoples the concept of absolute truth as found in the Bible. However, this concept of absolute truth is not a cultural ordinance; therefore, the proposed trade being made could hardly be called "tit-for-tat." Religious influence mandates a personal willingness to believe in something that cannot be seen or proven, unlike culture, which is empirically existent within communities worldwide. It is easier to see the beauty and practicality in something that can be lived out physically and psychologically day-to-day than believing in something that is entirely a matter of faith.

Because we cannot know to what extent different religious communities have grasped the concept of belief, and, more notably, truth, and because every religion has, to an extent, an element of subjectivity, is it fair to say which is "better"? Are any of one culture's customs "better" than the next culture's? How can a judgment be made without a portion of partiality?

Religion is a far more sensitive issue than culture. Culture governs the manner in which we interact together communally and how we live externally; religion governs every capacity of our being (or so some claim), which would seem to, in turn, affect our objectivity, rendering us less effective for intellectual discussions that are based on this earth and by empirical, earthly principles. Religion's narrowly-pointed arguments lose some of their potency when dealing with the objective, as they claim to have knowable truth, unlike culture, which allows individuals to collectively live while being individually subjective with regard to truth. One seems to claim absolutes and absolution; the other facilitates a positive earthly environment.

Culture certainly preserves tradition, as does religion; however, one is open to revision, while the other seems to be locked. Cultural customs evolve over time, with the beauty of heritage still being preserved for centuries later. As most religion is set in stone, as the times change it is becoming increasingly difficult to find relevance for religion in society. Mandates that seemingly bear little significance today are still upheld simply because they are mandated. When such mandates are labeled irrelevant based on contemporary reason and thought, such arguments are often discounted, as the change in intellectual reason is often deemed irrelevant in religious circles, based on the assertion of human distortion and sin. As such, there is little tolerance for change in religion, while culture is flexible and constantly changing.

Existence within the world as Christians presents a challenge, to deal with both religion and culture, with the former being unable to change and the latter which is changing rapidly. The balance between the two is certainly not an easy one to nail, but to effectively represent the meaning of Christianity, we cannot be tied down fully by the constraints of old-time religion, and we must find a way to be relevant for the ever-evolving culture. However, there are several ways that we can hammer the first few in: firstly, to acknowledge the morality existing within other religions and cultures. Always examine the good first. Secondly, to realize that our version of the truth cannot be presented as fact, regardless of whom we converse with. Faith is to a degree subjective, and so therefore cannot be solidified as proof. Thirdly: the need to explore Christianity in light of contemporary reason and science. This may prove particularly challenging for some, but will certainly provide aid when engaging other religions and cultures that assert other beliefs, but still find common ground in the way they form their beliefs.

Balancing Christianity with religion and culture is certainly a challenge; however, it is a challenge that all active Christians must be willing to make. This world is the reality—this is where we exist right now, and where we co-exist with multiple religions and cultures. Heading into Easter, I would ask that when you remember Christ's sacrifice two thousands years ago, consider how he would have related to society today. Can we carry his cross in the contemporary age? Life is too short to be living in the ages now passed. Truth is what we believe it is, unbound by religion but found in reality, which is where Christ set himself in time. As you consider what point in time reality lies for you, ask yourself: wouldn't Christ be relevant for today?

Considering the Validity of Conspiracy Theories

IAN VAN HARTE
JUNIOR STAFF WRITER

The word conspiracy often sets people off. Few choose to consider them perhaps because of the very sense of the word. Conspiracies seem to evoke feelings found in over-the-top, plot-twisting spy thrillers and political fiction or they are seen as the stuff of big, scruffy-bearded men preaching in the city.

However there are numerous stories that many buy into that, by definition, are fit to be called conspiracies. For instance, the war in Iraq, where hundreds of soldiers are still deployed, and the four overly satirized words that launched it: weapons of mass destruction. We are all aware that this was a lie. There were no weapons found but soldiers are still there fighting the war. Many believe that the real reason for the U.S. invasion of Iraq was to take over the oil supply in the Middle East. Certainly that is a conspiracy, and one that many people, with good reason, believe.

As a bit of an aside, there are a number of people who believe that the United States is fighting for the political state of Iraq, capturing Saddam Hussein and establishing a democracy and calling the plan questionable but necessary. In response to that there is a report revealing perhaps a truer colour of the heart of the mission and its devisers. In one of the many bombing raids on Iraq in the past, the U.S. specifically targeted Iraq's water supply. The U.S. has also taken chlorine from them, a necessary commodity for sanitizing their natural water sources; thus, ridding Iraq of its water. They knew removing the water supply would do no harm to Saddam or his officers, but it devastates Iraq's poor, and predominately its children. David James Duncan has an article, if you want to read more, called "A prayer for water and children" on this story, in which he attaches actual numbers to those affected. This investigation was done by an American journalist, Thomas Nagy, but not received by any major newsrooms, which leads to the next conspiracy.

Corruption and manipulation within the media is a subject discussed the most, I would say, without having any actual depth or profundity. Nevertheless, it is an issue of which we are all aware. We all know that big name news corporations choose to focus on some stories while unfairly excluding others. We are aware that there are many important, even crucial, news stories not streamed, photographs not seen, voices not heard. The majority of articles on Afghanistan concern either our parliament's debating the country's presence there or the death of a soldier. Few reports on the action being done in the country or on its condition are made available. The amount of articles on anything about Iraq reported here are extremely minimal. It is not that people are not willing to cover these stories. Plenty of honest journalists are witnesses in those countries but their stories are censored. This is not to say that nothing inside the paper is worthwhile, only that independent views are rarely represented. In fact, 70% of Canada's newspapers are owned by only a few corporations. This conspiracy, of a deceiving or corrupt media, is one of which most of us are aware, even if only at a general level.

Scores of people believe that the government lies to us, and with solid evidence to back them up. What seems to make the conspiracy less believable is the possibility that there is a larger plan of which this lie is only a part. Fortunately for everyone, there are independent journalists and magazines who offer to investigate and publish the stories that other newspapers seldom make public. The internet is full of great alternative stuff including scholarly work with credible sources and research, not just eccentric and bubbling web-bloggers. The information is out there and it is important to investigate both sides and balance what you read. David James Duncan's writing, for example, would be a great place to start.

As citizens of Canada, but more as human beings of the world, it is crucial to be alert to current events and, in that way, participate in national and world affairs. We can not simply assume our leaders know what is best without exploring the cases for ourselves. It likely would not be healthy to view the government as one conspiring corporation out to enslave us all, yet there is still the likelihood that our governments do menace. Stay tuned.

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COMMENTARY

Getting Past the Post

What can Christians gain from a Post-Modern approach?

JULIE KONYNDYK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I, like many soon-to-be graduates, can't help but count down the days that remain between now and graduation. It's with a mix of anticipation, desperation, excitement and fear that we look upon that day and that diploma. As we move toward that pivotal moment, it's only natural that our minds start to get a little retrospective. We begin tracing back the threads that ran through so many of our courses, and seek to tie up the loose ends. We subconsciously try to make sense of the broad themes that were introduced to us in our 100-level classes oh so long ago. We stop and think, "what's it all about?". Of course, these themes vary for every major, every concentration and every student. I have yet to fully make sense of any of them (I think that's what the rest of my life is for). However, I'm quite certain it's safe to assume that all of us have heard one word in particular thrown around a great deal: Post-Modern. Or, if you'd rather, Post-Modernism, Post-Modernishness or, Post-Modernation. It's been Post-Modern Mania ever since my senior classes in high school. If you haven't come across it yet, just you wait. You'll be saying "that's so Po-Mo" in no time.

These discussions are by no means over. That very term takes on different meanings depending on whether it's being discussed in light of a philosophical, literary, aesthetic, or historical context. Putting those specifications aside, most of us have become all-too familiar with that term in the broadest sense of the word. And, our Reformed education has led us to what seems to be a very finite conclusion: Post-Modernism is very, very bad.

Over simplistic? Absolutely. Realistic for some Redeemer students? I'm afraid so. These endless discussions on life in a Post-Modern world have embedded in many of us something I'd venture to call Post-Modernphobia. What is the main symptom of such a phobia? Irrational fear towards this Post-Modern, God-forsaken world of ours (note the sarcasm). Before I continue, I have to insert a subtle disclaimer: Obviously, I understand the dangers of a Post-Modern worldview. It removes the notion of absolute truth, makes way for rampant individualism, anything-goes morals, whatever-works-for-you religions, and Oprah-answers for every trial or tribulation. This is not healthy, I'll admit. But in recent discussions I've had with friends and colleagues, I'm beginning to worry Christians in particular aren't taking the right approach to deal with this shift.

As discussed in one of my Pop-Culture classes, Redeemer seems to introduce an unchanging set of "dirty" words for any of their students. Among them: cultural relativism, individualism, existentialism and globalization. These are all very risky concepts that are prominent in our current day-to-day lifestyles. These worldviews should have Christians on guard, but that's not where my particular problem is coming from. The real potential for damage arises when Christians hear other words associated with these concepts and label those words with the very same "hazardous" label they apply to a hyper-Post-Modern worldview. I'm referring to words like tolerance, compromise, diversity and understanding. I fear that many Christians are so afraid of losing our solid foundation to this soul-sucking Post-Modern playground that we would rather close off ourselves entirely then see the Post-Modern landscape for what it is: an opportunity. Tolerance, diversity and understanding are the fruits of the Post-Modern movement, and should be viewed as such.

So why are people so afraid? I think the root of the problem goes back to a confused understanding of what tolerance actually is. Many people I've talked to automatically associate tolerance with abandoning their own opinions. They don't see it as an understanding of an opinion different then their own, but rather something that asks them to sacrifice their own ideals. This isn't the case. Surely we can celebrate each other's differences inside and outside of the the Christian faith while still being rooted in absolute truth. Let's not assume that to tolerate or understand another opinion automatically leads to a rootless existence. After all, when we as Christians are seeking to make our case to a disbelieving world, don't we request this same level of understanding? Post-Modernism allows for openness to Spiritual discussions, and the chance to share to our stories. This opportunity should push Christians out the door rather than back inside. While the widespread incredulity towards meta-narratives is disheartening, the chance for us to make the case for our own meta-narrative is upon us. If we are willing to listen, others will be willing to hear us out. And once they are willing to listen, Christians should be willing to share.

We are living in a Post-Modern age, and trying to understand the people on the other size of the fence isn't fraternizing with the enemy. Once we come to understand them, we've made the first step in carrying out the great commission we've all received.

Perhaps Bob Dylan said it best when he sang:

Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
Keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again.....
Don't criticize
What you can't understand For the time's they are a changin'

A few years later he sang:

May your hands always be busy
May your feet always be swift
May you have a strong foundation,
When the winds of changes shift.

I'd like to think these two humble requests can compliment each other rather than cancel each other out. Christians can and should see the world with eyes wide open, while remaining rooted in Christ. If not, Christianity itself is destined to become a neighbourhood of boarded windows and exclusive cliques, rather than a community of believers that seek to celebrate, and share, the greatest hope humanity has.

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Wedding Etiquette

A Brief Primer Based on Minimal Experience

SCOTT FAIRLEY
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

It's that time of year again. Love, like snow, is in the air. Presumably –unlike snow– it is also in your mailbox. That's right, it's wedding invitation time. Some of you are sending them, and others receiving. There's probably also some overlap between the two. Regardless, no small number of us are attending weddings in the coming months. I'm one of them, and with the hopes of keeping my issue appearance streak alive, I feel compelled to offer some wisdom and insights on the do's and don'ts of weddings.

Weddings are, at least in my experience, fairly enjoyable. They are a celebration of dedication and fidelity that can generally affect even the most cynical. Love is, medically speaking, in the air. But you, as guest, are not free of responsibility. To be asked to join the celebration is an honour. Treat it as such. Here are a few ill-informed but well-meaning pointers.

Your gift, should you bring one

I'd wager that many of you, whether it was your purchase or not, can think of an ultimately impractical or inappropriate wedding present given to a couple. Sometimes this is excusable, most couples have little need for more than one toaster or set of towels and a little levity can go a long way among the pomp and circumstance of a wedding –after all, weddings are celebrations. But by the same token, it's hard to make toast without a toaster, and towels are one of the few things that people use daily. They're really, really useful and it's really, really important to have a good number of them in rotation.

The criteria for useful gifts is hardly universal, but it's fair to say that some things simply aren't useful. Examples are plentiful, but there's a good chance that few couples have a need to populate their bookshelves with unusual books. Sure, it's kind of clever, cheeky, and good for a laugh at the reception, but that toaster would have been a lot more useful in the long run, because no matter how steamy the book might be, it's metaphorical steam, which cooks poorly. The same goes for other gifts that, in another context, would be appreciated and welcome. This is why most couples are registered at places like Home Outfitters or Bed Bath and Beyond and not Chapters or HMV.

Your guest, should you bring one

Most, if not all invitations give you the option of bringing a guest. This is a formality for invitees who are married or in a long term relationship; no real need to stress about it. But for single guests, it can be a potential headache. The choice you make needs to be a personal one, of course, but stick to it once you make it. I'll occasionally poke fun of my role as "token single guy" at weddings, but when you're at the wedding, nobody likes a killjoy. It certainly won't enhance your experience, nor those around you, so what's the point? Besides, there are plenty of opportunities to meet interesting people at weddings.

Should you bring a date, it should ideally be someone you're familiar with. A wedding is a rather lousy first date (all things considered), especially if the guest doesn't know the bride and groom. Symbolically, it's also pretty heavy.

Your conduct

Look, I saw Wedding Crashers. Twice. And it was funny and clever and entertaining and all that, but here's the thing: it was also a non-so-subtle slight against men who see weddings as just an excuse to hook up. Yes, love will be in the air, and yes it's a celebration. And of course, there will be countless members of the opposite sex dressed to the nines (or at least to the eights). But seriously. Odds are, you're not as cool as Vince Vaughn. Maybe you're not even as cool as Owen Wilson. I know I'm not. So clearly, I'm not cool enough to try to crash a wedding, and I think I have a leg up on most. But there are more factors in play than mere coolness. Romance isn't an exact science. I've looked into it, and it isn't a science at all. Two single people in a generally romantic setting does not automatically equal a successful hook-up. In fact, it's usually just two single people in a generally romantic setting and nothing more.

Also, this is just bad form. The wedding isn't about you. If you're going to a wedding with an agenda, that agenda should be to be a happy, shiny, voice of support for your friends tying the knot. Speaking of voices, should you give a toast, be brief and funny. If you're planning on telling a joke, make it broad. One of my earliest wedding memories was at my uncle's wedding in 1997. The best man told a joke and nobody under 20 laughed (myself included). Such experiences should not be repeated.

After the wedding

This time I do have some personal experience to back up my advice. Keep the couple in your circle of friends after the ceremony and reception. My parents receive calls to this day on their anniversary from old friends and it always brightens their day, even 26 years after. Even an e-mail will do the trick, but whatever the means, keep in touch.

Well those are my four main pointers based on observation, anecdote, and over a decade of sitcom wedding episodes. Stick by them, and your wedding experience will be 15-20% more enjoyable. Guaranteed.

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REPTILA:
The Perfect Way to Enjoy God's Creation

DAVE VAN ES
SPECIAL TO THE CROWN

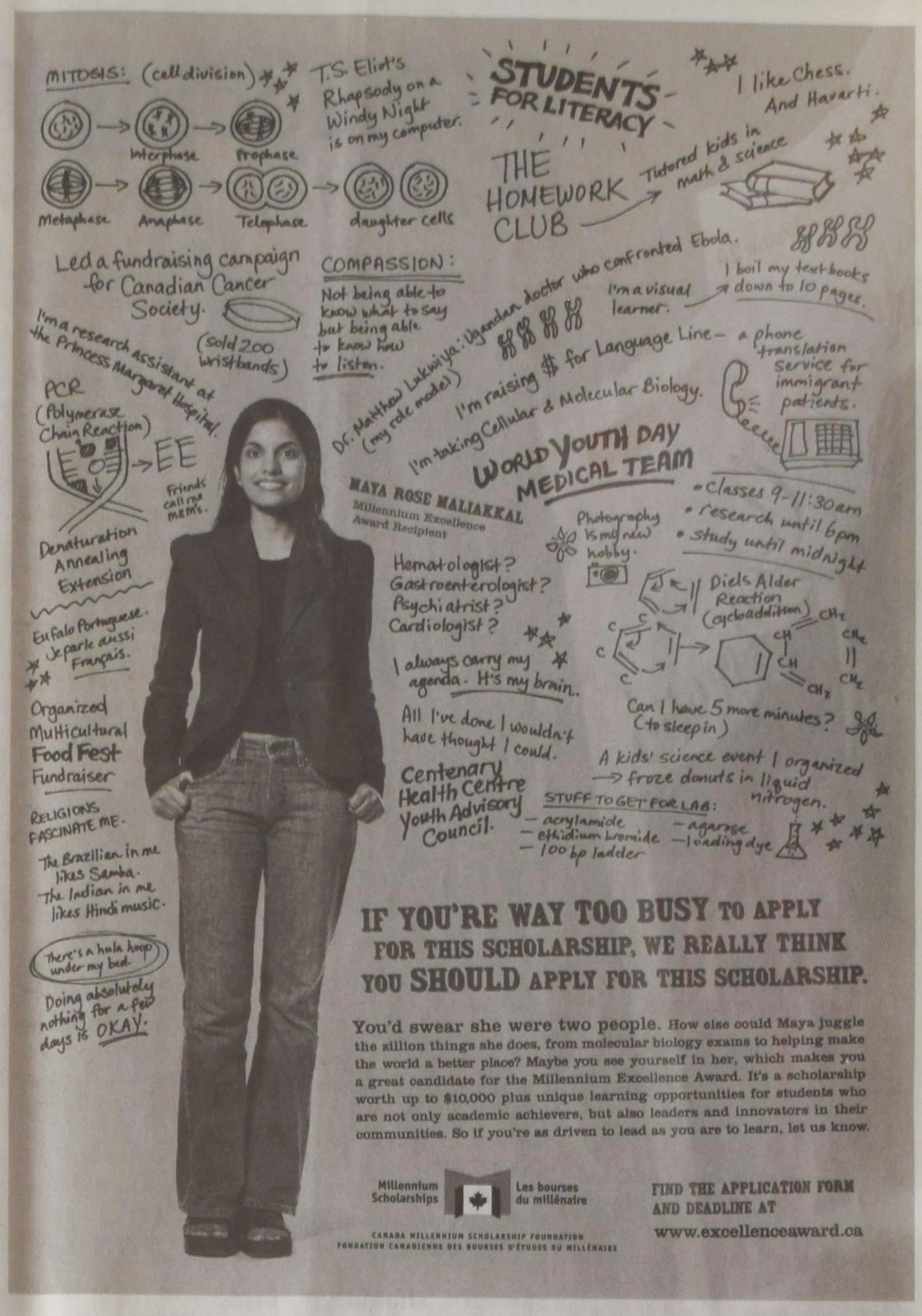
This past summer I spent hours at Balls' Falls in Vineland, Ontario, searching for the Western Water snake and Milk snakes. I am privileged to live in an area that is still wild enough to provide habitat for such creatures. In my search for the Western Water snake, I came upon many of God's reptiles and amphibians. Every creature that I was able to observe had its own unique features and temperament. What a wonder! I now have at least hundred photos detailing my adventures, as well as an increased desire to understand God's world, and how all of man-kind is called to act as steward-rulers.

So what do Environmental science and Biology majors (or anyone for that matter) do to satisfy their desire to be with God's creatures when the weather outside is less than tropical? Find other ways to play with reptiles and amphibians of course. I for one cannot think of a better way to get your brain thinking about the wonders of God's creation then to be face to face with a ten inch King Cobra, or watching a twelve inch Boa Constrictor apply 600 lbs/in^2 of squeezing pressure to its lunch. Where, you ask, may you see such animals without becoming lunch for a hungry snake or bitten by an angry Monkey Skink? At Reptilia in Vaughn, Ontario, which happens to be a short fifty minute drive from Redeemer's campus. Reptilia is a 15,000 square foot zoo that boasts a collection of reptiles and amphibians from around the globe.

On January 5 I had the pleasure of going to Reptilia alongside well-known Green Team member Carrie VanDorp. We arrived early, and were one of the first groups to be ushered in at the10am opening. Looking at Reptilia from the outside we were not really sure what to expect. The building did not really standout from the others around it, but once inside we knew we were in for a memorable day. What we did know though was that at certain times of the day a guide would give a fifteen minute talk about an animal or we could witness the feeding of a snake or crocodile. Along with these fantastic opportunities they had multiple shows in their auditorium making for a great day out. The guides are willing to take any questions, and treated us with respect and interest. We were students fresh out of Bio 241 (Zoology), and thought ourselves expects on the reptile world. But we were humbled by the vast knowledge of our guide, Cameron, who grew up in South Africa and worked with poisonous snakes since he was twelve.

So how can you get to Reptilia? Well, there are several ways: If you see myself or Carrie in the hallway, ask us if we are planning anymore trips. Talk to Professor Chaing and beg her to take you in the trunk of her car when she goes. Get in touch with any member of the Science faculty at Redeemer University/College, with this article in hand, and explain to them how important such a field trip is to the Science department.

Finally, you could always create your own trip to Reptilia, but if you do so make sure that you contact the people mentioned above because I'm sure they would happily go again. If you have any questions feel free to email Dave Van Es at dvanes@redeemer.ca or go to the Reptilia website @ www.reptilia.org



A Plea for Financial Planning

It's the end of another year, and another chance to plan your future. In between thinking about which classes to take and what summer job to apply for, spend some time thinking about of your finances. Financial aid is preparing to hand out a number of awards based on academics and students with financial concerns. All you have to do is apply. Some awards require a bit of extra work, but the possibility of success makes it well worth it. Think of it as the first step in making next year's tuition. The amount that you can receive far outweighs the effort needed to complete the application. Make time to go and meet our finance department. Don't miss out on simpler ways to help pay for school just because you didn't know what was available. Take the time to learn the application process, because you'll have that much less debt once you graduate. Debt may not seem like such a big deal in school, but it is a very real problem facing former students once they finish their education. A twenty minute meeting can only help. Take the time to plan your finances and see what options are available to you besides going into debt. It could lead to that essentialy bit money that saves you all that grief further down the line.

SENATE NEWS

The votes are in and counted.
Here are the results for your 2008-2009 Executive Senate:

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Vice-President of Finance: Kevin Bratcher
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Thank-you to all who voted!

SECOND ROUND OF ELECTIONS FOR SENATE

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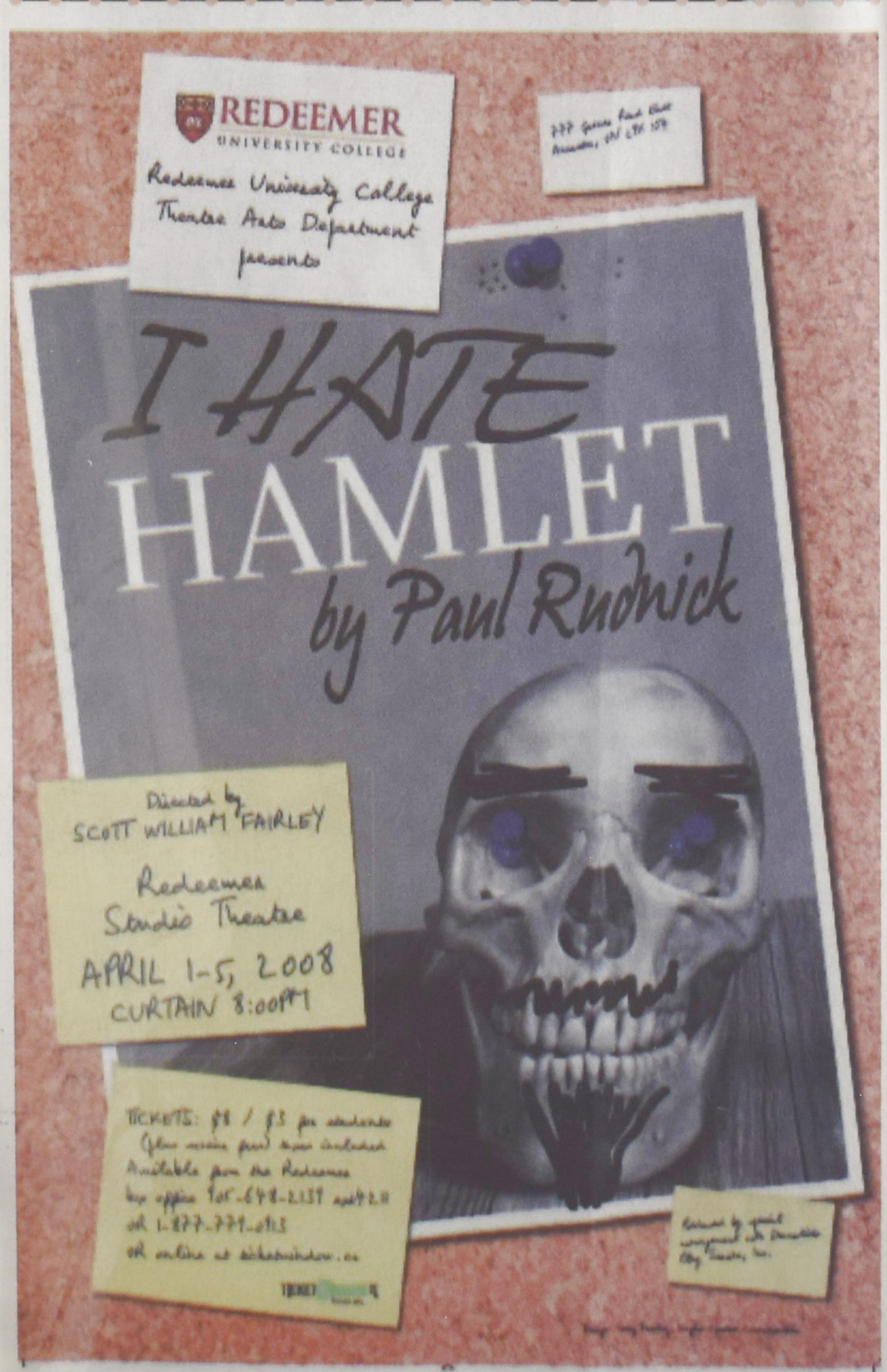
Rainforest Rendevous

BANQUET 2008



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TIMOTHY EPP
PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY

Perhaps the pioneer sociologist Georg Simmel was a rockin' dad. After all, he coined the term 'role conflict' to explain what happens when the expectations of two or more of a person's social statuses come into conflict. I experience this all the time; as an avid fan of music, I'd love to attend concerts every week/night, but I have this rather intrusive sense of responsibility as a husband and father of two. In order to deal with this conundrum I've set a couple of rules for my own concert attendance, with few exceptions: (i) the event must be in Hamilton; (ii) the cost must be relatively low; (iii) I can attend a maximum of one concert per month, on average. Surprisingly (or not), I have few problems finding good music in Steeltown. In fact, some of the most raved about musicians actually come from here. Here are two examples:

Math rock? Folk-tronica? The music of Dan Snaith (aka Caribou) has been known by both labels, and has generated critical acclaim: Paste Magazine listed his fourth CD Andorra as one of the 'Top 100 Albums of 2007'; Rolling Stone featured Caribou as a 'Breaking Artist' last August. Born in 1978, Snaith grew up in Dundas, and even wrote a song about his home town on his debut album, Start Breaking My Heart. Dan studied mathematics at the University of Toronto, and recently received his PhD from London's Imperial College, while continuing to record and tour. In doing so, he followed in the footsteps of other math profs in his family; his father, mother and siblings all hold math degrees, and his father and brother are math profs (University of Sheffield, University of Bristol). Snaith initially recorded and performed under the moniker 'Manitoba', but when confronted with a lawsuit by 'Handsome Dick' Manitoba (formerly of the proto-punk NYC band the Dictators), Snaith changed his name to Caribou. While Snaith has been quoted as saying that he was seeking a band name to represent the wilds of Canada, other sources suggest that the selection of 'Caribou' has less noble origins (a hallucinogenic vision?). However, in Snaith's defense, Paste's review of Andorra notes that the album is "too precise to be made with drugs." Indeed, Andorra combines computer-generated rhythms and remarkable synth work with instrumentation and vocals that recall music of the 1960s, particularly the Zombie, the Mamas and Papas and the Beach Boys. The title of the CD comes from Snaith's perceptions of the country of the same name: "I'd imagined a sort of time-forgotten romantic mountain principality, a very evocative place that matched the overtly romantic emotional songs I was making for the record." (Tandemnews.com, 2008-03-16). Although Snaith has been labeled a 'math geek', he recently told a reporter: "[Mathematicians] definitely are geeks, but I think the best thing about them is that they're so interested and obsessive about mathematics and lots and lots of other things...To me, geekiness just means being really interested in a very specific thing that you love doing, or that maybe is very abstract." (The Gateway, October 29, 2007). By the time that you read this, Caribou will have completed its March 18 performance at the Casbah ($15), but Snaith performs in Hamilton on a fairly frequent basis.

However, you'll still have time to catch another local singer/ songwriter. Like Snaith, Kathleen Edwards celebrates her 30th birthday this year. Born in Ottawa, her father's profession as a diplomat meant that Kathleen actually grew up in many countries, including south Korea and Switzerland. Edwards studied classical violin beginning at age five, but when her family moved back to Canada Edwards became interested in the music of Bob Dylan and Neil Young. At the age of twenty-one Kathleen began playing open mike nights and writing her own songs. Her first recording, the six-song EP Building 55, was released the same year, with five hundred copies pressed. Edwards began touring in the same truck that is featured on the cover of her first full-length CD Failer, making enough gas money to get her from concert to concert. By the fall of 2000 she began to record Failer in Ottawa and signed with the Rounder recording company the next year. Following this, Edwards performed at SXSW and opened for Don Williams, Melissa Etheridge and Richard Buckner in 2002. The next year she was featured on The Tonight Show, Letterman, toured Europe and was featured as one of Rolling Stone's '10 to watch in 2003'. She has since released Back to Me and this year's Asking for Flowers, which received critical acclaim in Rolling Stone and Paste. The North Carolina News&Observer has described Edwards as a "quick-witted Canadian gal...a twangier incarnation of Liz Phair", the New York Times has described Edward's songs as able to "pare situations down to a few dozen words while they push country-rock towards its primal impulses of thump and twang." Edwards describes her own songs as creating "a real, vivic, three-dimensional portrait...I want to use every crayon in the box" (MapleMusic.com). Songs on her most recent offering explore issues of love, racism, international politics, and even hockey ("You're the great one/ I'm Marty McSorley"). Edwards works closely with her guitarist, producer and husband Colin Cripps; since their marriage Edwards has moved to Cripps' home town of Hamilton and continues to operate from this base. Kathleen Edwards plays at the Westside Concert Theatre on Saturday, March 22nd ($25).

Other Upcoming Concerts:

Carrie Underwood:
Copps Coliseum, March 22nd

Buddy Guy:
Hamilton Place, April 4th

The Proclaimers:
Hamilton Convention Centre, April 19th

Gordon Lightfoot:
Hamilton Place, May 2nd

kd Lang:
Hamilton Place Theatre, May 25th

Matthew Good:
Hamilton Place Theatre, June 6th

EXCLUSIVE MAINSTAGE PREVIEW

RYAN SERO - SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Because I spend so much time working on mainstage plays here at Redeemer, I've never had the pleasure and privilege of reviewing one for The Crown. Well, finally I found myself working on a different theatrical project (shameless plug: I Hate Hamlet, April 1-5) and so I'm finally able to review the mainstage, which in this case, is Everyman, a medieval morality play.

I decided to contact Ray Louter, the director, and was allowed to sit in on a practice and "preview" the show. Finally, you can read about the mainstage before you decide whether or not to buy your ticket.

So I went Saturday and sat down to watch the practice go on. I knew my writing would have to be cautious. Many of the people involved are my friends, I can't hurt them. Besides, there are more of them, and they're bigger than me. Fortunately, no confrontations will be necessary.

What I saw was something brilliant, moving, edgy, old and new, and something that was very different, but very familiar. The story of Everyman is one of Bunyanesque allegory. God sends His servant, Death (Alicia Krusselbrink) to call Everyman (Noah Hicks) to the seat of Judgement. Everyman protests, and is allowed to bring friends to the grave to speak his case. After calling on characters such as Goods (Amie Vermeer), Everyman finds that the only one who is willing accompany him is his Good Deeds (Terri Brunsting), but she is too weak to accompany him.

The story continues, and allegory is the word of the day here. But the setting of the play has been set in contemporary Hamilton, making the application of Everyman's plight to every man watching easier. Good Deeds is an invalid in a wheelchair, being pushed around by her sister Knowledge (Kaitlyn McGee). The story is simplistic, yet brilliant in its simplicity. The setting carries interesting alternative takes on characters who appear not necessarily as we might think of them.

God, for example, is not an old guy with a flowing robe, but is sung (yes, sung) as a trio of women. This is potentially shocking, but, it's got an unearthly, Heavenly sound, in Trinitarian form, and if you think about it, isn't one man "being" God a bit arrogant, anyway?

Unfortunately, such lofty material has its consequences. A handful of cast members didn't seem to know quite what they were doing. Excuseably, given the esoteric nature of some of the roles, but a weak point, nonetheless. This, being a rehearsal, might be cleared up. It wasn't that these actors and actresses were bad, either, just that they didn't seem to "get it". They read the lines fine, and with conviction, but without any clarity and depth. In layman's terms, they were adequate for a play, but not for a transcendent theatrical experience (say that ten-times fast).

The highlight, for me, was hearing the music. Created by Aaron Craig and performed by Craig and other members of the cast, the music was what really sold me on the show. Go to the show, listen to the music. Buy the soundtrack. Okay, there's no soundtrack, but if there were, I'd buy it. The music took the activity from being a potentially dry morality play with an interesting twist to being an artistic experience, combining forms seamlessly. Not only was the music good in and of itself, but it was in perfect synchronization with, and complement to, the action on stage.

The sound was a blend of Celtic flute sounds, Native American drumming, and an accompanying noise reminiscent of a reverent spiritualism long-lost to Churches and religion, it was a pure worship sound. There were, at points, liturgical choral overtones as well. It friggin' rocked.

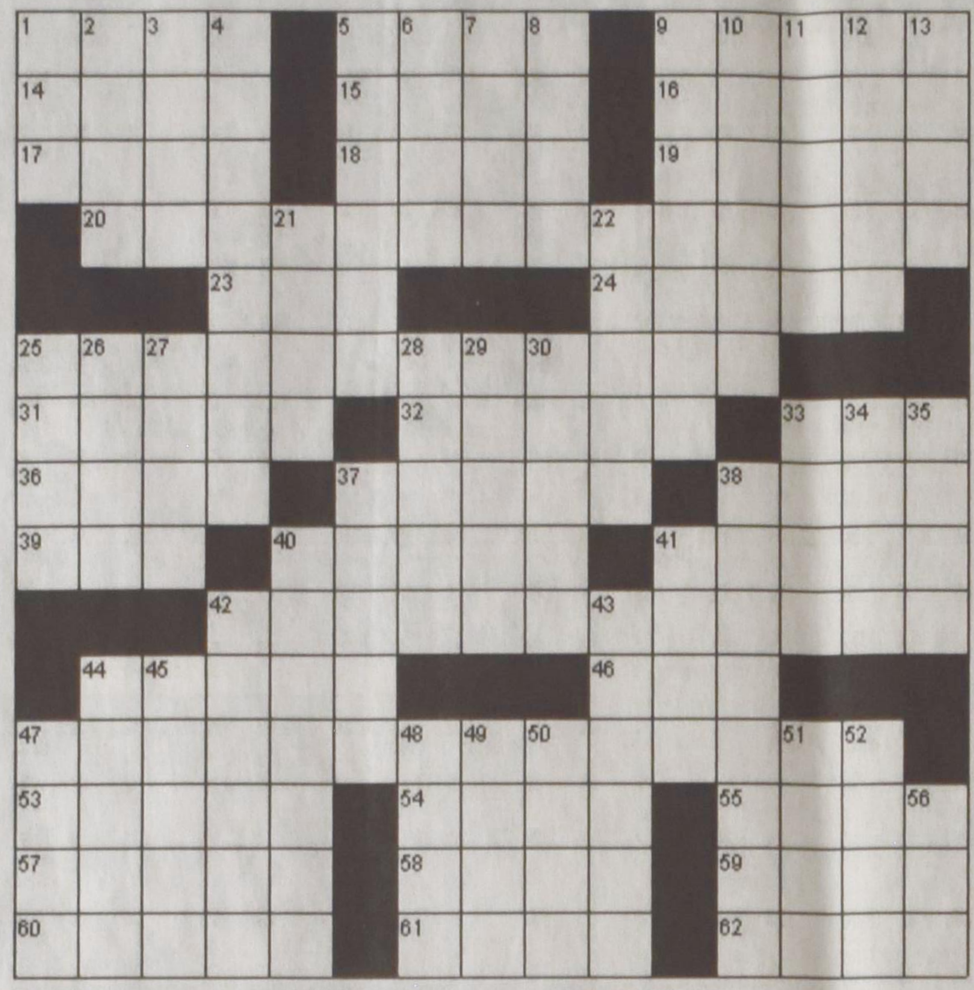
Overall, the cast and crew have a sprint to the finish line ahead of them, but there are some rehearsals left. Unfortunately, I saw no costumes or lights, but the set (designed by Sharon Klassen) was suggestive and harsh, with hard angles and a gritty feel perfect for the subject matter. Combine a couple of good performances with the musical genius, and one or two actors lost in the allegory were a small price to pay. Everyman will be good.

DIVERSIONS

CROSSWORD CORNER

March 18, 2008 - "Reverse Course"

By Thomas W. Schier



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ACROSS

1. Matter unit
5. Painter van Eyck and tenor Peerce
9. Without empathy
14. Horse play?
15. Son of Rebekah
16. Olympic gymnast Comaneci
17. Throw off
18. Pitchfork prong
19. Rap sheet info
20. Reserves a single hotel room?
23. Comedian Charlotte
24. Bridge positions
25. Maliciously burn a complimentary ticket?
31. City 60 miles southeast of Buffalo
32. Rotund plus
33. Dog's foot
36. Bring up, as kids
37. Con ___ (with devotion)
38. Ming Dynasty collectible
39. Acknowledge silently
40. Cry of a sheep
41. Home on high
42. Shape an opening pool shot?
44. Deal with
46. Shower safety item
47. Enjoy boxercise?
53. Speedily
54. Paraphernalia
55. Spill the beans
57. Fix, as a driveway
58. Resonated
59. Have the final say
60. Lover's keepsake, perhaps
61. Otherwise
62. Prayer ending

DOWN

1. Tarzan cohort
2. "Lara Croft ___ Raider" (2001 film)
3. Mixed bag
4. Automobile
5. High-flying socialites
6. "Yeah, right!"
7. Prefix meaning "billionth"
8. Litigant
9. Synchronized, as mechanisms
10. Stroke lightly
11. Word before box or proof
12. Detroit footballers
13. Quick to the helm
21. "Blazing Saddles" actress Madeline
22. Rib
25. Utterly undecided
26. Muffin topper
27. Peruse
28. Zeroed (in on)
29. WWII torpedo craft
30. Capital city of Western Australia
33. Whittle (down)
34. Pacific Rim locale
35. Time period
37. Parcel out
38. Spinal column bone
40. Pesters
41. Rhyme scheme letters
42. Places many people hope to visit
43. Come forth into view
44. Terrif
45. Related on one's mother's side
47. Take different paths
48. Horribly uncouth fiend
49. Freshwater duck
50. "Silver Skates" boy
51. Grad
52. Whopper
56. Actor Kingsley

SUDOKU

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	9	1				8	3	
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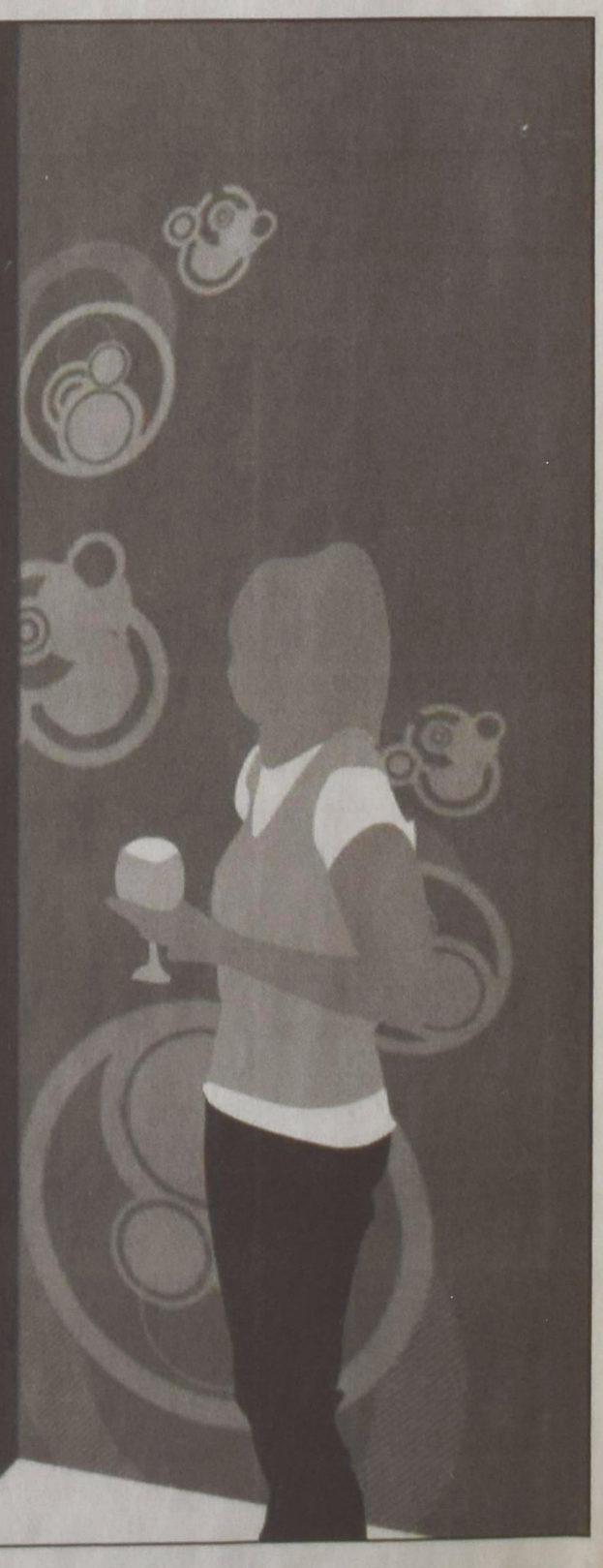
REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SENIOR STUDENT EXHIBITION

April 4, 2008 | 7:30 | The Art Gallery

Featuring artwork from:

Jimmy Bender
Sarah Bokma
Jelma Gorter
Jenni Haas
Julie Konyndyk